

BJ: Washington County was settled by people in Virginia.

DF: That makes sense, because- that, that's one thing that I wanted to mention that we talked about before the tape started was um. In Washington County there's a different spin on the Pittsburgh accent. There's a twang. A country twang to it. And I grew up with this until people made fun of me and brutally beat it out of me. (laughs)

BJ: Mm hmm

DF: But um, I grew up, I grew up with my mother's Philadelphia accent and my father's Pittsburgh accent, but somewhere along the way, because I knew a lot of people from Cannonsburg, and in Cannonsburg it's pretty prevalent, this, this=

BJ: =twang=

DF: =Like Pittsburgh with a twang accent.

BJ: What do they do? Can you think of anything they do that's different, or could you imitate it or something.

DF: Let me think. Um, no, no I guess it's been a while. Um, no, I think, some people have asked me before if I'm from the South=

BJ: =Mm hmm=

DF: =because some of the things I say- but I think my accent, though, has continued to shape, though. It's kind of strange. Over still to this day, it still changes depending on where I'm living or who the people I'm talking with are. People have asked me if I'm from the South before. So I don't know, maybe- And, and things like, you'll hear people say Moon Township differently. You'll hear "moon."

BJ: "Moon, moon" uh huh.

DF: "Moon" yeah, uh huh. Somebody made fun of me for saying that one time and I thought about it, and I said, you know, that really sounds weird, so I, I actively change my- I try to correct myself when I can. But it all depends. I spent a long time tending a bar in a predominantly black bar.

BJ: Mm hmm.

DF: And just from everyday my conversation, and my neighbors and several of my neighbors were black, and over time, I picked up some of the- some of- And you know that's a kind of a southern twang too.

BJ: Yeah it is.

DF: You know, you hear, except for, you know in New, except for New Yorkers, you hear most, a lot of Black communities there's a lot of Southern.

BJ: Mm hmm. Well that's where most Blacks came from.

DF: Mm hmm right. So, I, some of the things I even picked up in those day, and that are still there with me today and it all depends sometimes on who I'm talking with. If it's an older friend, who I know from back a long time ago, I might talk differently than I do to somebody else. You know and some of words I use- I say "orange" which is definitely not a Pittsburgh thing.

BJ: Say what?

DF: "Orange"

BJ: "Orange"

DF: and "Florida." Those are, those are from my mother.

BJ: "Florida". That is true. That is from your mother. My dad was from New Jersey, and I remember, the same thing. I mean it was the same thing that I was aware of in his accent. He said "orange" differently than we did. And "chocolate", he said "chocolate" differently too.

DF: Yeah. And somebody made, a friend of mine in Philadelphia that I used to talk with all the time, used to make fun of how I said "rock." He said I had that -a-w- sound that's more, that's from here.

BJ: "Rock"

DF: ??? would say it's "rock" and I'd say "rock."

BJ: ((laughs)) Mm hmm. So what all, how would- you've obviously heard of the term Pittsburghese, right?

DF: Mm hmm.

BJ: Is that what you're talking about now, or is Pittsburghese something different that these differences you're talking about now?

DF: No, you mean the twang, no. It's it's more, it's it's just, it's like a farm Pittsburghese. I guess I'm having a hard time [thinking of exactly what-]

BJ: [Do they say, here's,] here's something I'm curious about. Do they say yinz differently?

DF: No.

BJ: Some people have told me that when you get down into say Green County that people say more like you'unz and that around here they say more like yinz. I don't know whether that's true or not.

DF: No. Not, not that I can think of. It has been a long time, now that I haven't talked with as many people with that accent from Washington County since I was, since I was in High School. I remember it then.

BJ: So what is Pittsburghese? I mean what-

"Down"DF: I guess it's, maybe it's not as guttural, just slightly less so, down there. And maybe the word down. The way I- I- Something about the way I say it, I think is- I don't know. But, a lot of things were similar like the word "dollar" wasn't "dollar" it was "dollar".

BJ: Mm hmm.

DF: And, and yinz though. Yeah. You can still hear that. My father never used that, and his grandfather, they refused. Nobody in their house, though the neighbors did, they never used the word yinz, they avoided it.

BJ: They thought it was sort of lower-class, or something? [Or what did they?]

DF: [I- I guess.] Or just, yeah. Probably. That you don't sound dignified when you use the word yinz. And though I make fun of the dialect, I also think it's something that makes Pittsburgh unique. And I can't- though we'll make jokes, and it is our stock accent to express ignorance, I guess as some one maybe in New York might do the Brooklyn accent, it's uh, it's also something that uh, I don't think should be eradicated. And sometimes, sometimes the words will slip. I- I'll say them too. Um, I guess. Like I said. It all depends who I'm talking with and, and how much, and how long I've know the person [how I'll talk with them.]

BJ: [So, you would] say you use some Pittsburghese sometimes?

downDF: Well, I huh, sometimes I will use, I wo- won't go through all the trouble of saying "down." I can just as easily say, well there's a lot less effort in the word

“dahn”. ((laughs)) Sometimes, yeah, I hear myself saying it. And some things never, some things never disappear completely.

BJ: So, I gather. I assume you’ve seen some of the kind of booklets and things about Pittsburghese.

DF: Yeah, I’ve seen them. And not all those words, not all those words I was familiar with.

BJ: Yeah.

DF: Gum band definitely. I never knew that sliding board wasn’t the common term for slides.

BJ: It isn’t? That’s new to me.

DF: No. I knew that when I went to college.

BJ: Sliding board. What do most people call them?

DF: Slide.

BJ: Just a slide.

DF: I remember having that conversation with the- because when I went to Duquesne there were a lot of people from the D. C., Baltimore, D.C. area.

BJ: Mm hmm. And they said it wasn’t called a sliding board. That’s interesting.

DF: I never heard redd up as a kid. Um-

BJ: But you=

DF: =I know the term. I don’t think I know anybody who’s ever actually used it though.

BJ: But you know it from these books and things.

DF: I really do. I know it from the jokes. But no, I don’t know anybody who uses it. But plenty of those I do. “Worsh” and also “woosh”. As in “wooship”. My father uses that=

BJ: =“Wooship.”=

DF: Yeah. I never understood it, and I’d laugh and say why do you say that.

BJ: Yeah, that’s interesting. Uh huh.

DF: But “worsh” and “Worshington” I heard plenty. Obviously, because I lived in Little “Worshington” yeah. So yeah.

BJ: So how long ago. Do you remember seeing these booklets and jokes when you were a kid, or-

DF: No- not until I was probably about high school age. Uh, no, all I knew is people would say, why do you say “color” and one of my friends made fun of me relentlessly until I stopped saying it.

BJ: Mm hmm

DF: Now I’m glad, because, [it’s really] it’s really obvious. And he said are you talking about Helen Keller? You know, but those, those kinds of things. It was more or less people who came in. That kid was from Texas actually. But yeah, people would make fun of you.

BJ: [‘Cause now you know.]

BJ: Yeah. Uh huh.

DF: In, in the high school I went to too, there were a lot of people from out of the area. Uh, more educated, and so, if you had that dialect, if you hung out with Cannonsburgers, which a lot of the people I did actually were.

BJ: Mm hmm.

DF: [Um, you’d get laughed at.]

BJ: [So you had-] were you were in Peter's Township there'd be sort of the Cannonsburg side and the Upper Saint Clair side and they'd be real different?

DF: More or less. 'Cause Cannonsburg was a separate school district, but they're not that far apart physically, and I used to hang out at a music store, and uh, that was kind of our. Like, I never thought about this until recently when I was watching somebody talk about the Black barbershop. That, that music store was like our, our place where we hung out, the younger guys and the older guys. And most of the guys there were from Cannonsburg, but more of the people that I went to school with were from Peter's Township. And there's always been a little rivalry. The Cannonsburgh kids. The Cannon Mac, 'cause the school is Cannon McMillan. And they'd always go, oh Peter's kids. And they always thought we were the spoiled uppity ones.

BJ: Mm hmm. Yeah. So I can see that would be a kind of environment where people would be noticing the way other people talked and maybe making jokes about it.

DF: Yeah. I really do think so.